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SUBJECT: PA LEADERSHIP DISCUSSES SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1605
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 1698

Classified By: Consul General Daniel Rubinstein
for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (S) Summary. Prime Minister Fayyad's highest priority in the area of security sector reform at present is to address allegations of, and prevent future, prisoner abuse. He convened NGOs on September 30 to encourage active monitoring of the situation, and threatened to dismiss any personnel linked to abuse. Fayyad said consolidation of the PA intelligence services was a matter of "months, not years," and the emerging service would direct its efforts externally. Other key security leaders echoed these priorities in separate October 1 meetings, noting PM Fayyad's emphasis on ending prisoner abuse and the positive impact of recent personnel changes. End summary.

FAYYAD FOCUSED ON PRISONER TREATMENT

[1](#)2. (C) PM Fayyad told the Consul General October 1 that his highest priority in this area is to address allegations of prisoner abuse (Ref A). "We're focused on the elimination of abuses," Fayyad said. "The greatest risk is not (the lack of) consolidation, it is abuses in the system. This is as big a threat as Hamas ever could be. This is not the kind of state we want to build." Fayyad noted that he had met the previous day to meet with human rights NGOs active in the field. "I told them, 'monitor more'," said Fayyad. "I said, 'I want more frequent checks of my services -- I need your help to deal with the problem.'"

[1](#)3. (S) Fayyad also discussed his medium-term strategy for consolidation of the existing PA intelligence services. "It's like a bank merger," he said. "Sometimes, when you merge two bad small banks, you end up with one big bad bank. We need to fix the intelligence services first, then re-orient them externally." The project would not wait indefinitely, Fayyad said, adding, "this is a matter of months, not years."

INTEL PERSONNAL CHANGES CLARIFY ROLES

[1](#)4. (S) PA Civil Police Chief Hazim Atullah told Post October 1 that he felt pressure from Fayyad to improve prisoner treatment. "Fayyad is very sensitive about this," Atullah said. "And we know why. It is the principle, and it is also the donors." Atullah noted that personnel changes in the PA's intelligence leadership (Ref B) had helped clarify roles and responsibilities amongst the services. Henceforth, Atullah said, PA Military Intelligence (MI) would return to its mandated role as the security sector's Internal Affairs division, rather than operating as an independent

intelligence agency. "They (MI) will conduct no arrests of any citizen in any case," Atullah confirmed. "Anyone they arrested before, they will now transfer to General Intelligence (GI). And if anyone is in their jails, he will be a member of the security services. Their job is to protest the security services from infiltration only."

15. (S) Atullah indicated that he had negotiated a new division of labor, which hewed more closely to PA law, with new GI Chief Majid Faraj. (Note: GI is formally mandated with conducting external intelligence collection and operations.) "I met with Majid last night," Atullah said, "and we agreed they will never arrest any citizen. That is my job. There will be no GI patrols in the streets; that is only me." He attributed this cooperation to good personal and professional relationships amongst the new generation of security chiefs. "The guys," Atullah said, "we are all of one age, we all know one another very well. Today, I feel very happy, and I am sure we are going to re-build the security services to be the basis for a Palestinian state. I told Fayyad, we need to do this very quickly."

MOI BECOMING "MOTHER OF ALL MINISTRIES"

16. (C) Minister of Interior and close Fayyad ally Said Abu Ali was similarly optimistic about the prospects of more comprehensive security sector re-organization. "We're ending the state of division and isolation between different services," he said to Post October 1. "We're ensuring that in future the services will report to a unified command. We're transforming the security services into a security

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establishment." While he acknowledged that the "goal" of having "three security services which report to the Ministry of the Interior" remained unachieved, he noted that "the situation today is more conducive to reform, and we're closer to that goal than we were in the past."

17. (C) Abu Ali described the practical reporting relationships as messy, but nonetheless providing a strong role for the MOI. "Certain security services report to the Ministry of Interior by law," he said, "and others report to me by delegation. Of course at the end of the day, all the services report to the President, and after him to the Prime Minister -- because we have a presidential - parliamentary system. But the Minister of the Interior is the right hand of the Prime Minister, and security is the underpinning of all aspects of governance and development. MOI is becoming the mother of all ministries; it is needed to provide the environment for all other ministries to be able to perform."

PRESS SPECULATION ON SECTOR CONSOLIDATION

18. (C) Reports published in London-based pan-Arab daily al-Sharq al-Awsat on September 27 speculated about an imminent sector-wide consolidation of the PA security forces into three umbrella services. Senior and mid-level contacts throughout the security services tell Post that the speculation is premature and inaccurate in many details. Key questions regarding the proposed re-organization remain unanswered; amongst these are whether the Presidential Guard (PG) will retain its current status as a small dignitary and facilities protection force, or evolve into a full-fledged security service. It is also unclear what additional personnel and structural adjustments will accompany the eventual merger of the GI and PSO.

RUBINSTEIN